Infrastructure development in districts

217. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared a comprehensive plan for the infrastructure development in the backward districts in the country;

(b) if so, the details of projects undertaken for execution during the current year; and

(c) the details of funds proposed to be granted for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) to (c) No, Sir. District Plans are prepared by the concerned State Governments. The Central Government supplements the efforts for development of backward districts through programmes such as Rashtriya Shram Vikas Yojana, National Food for Work Programme and various other schemes for poverty alleviation and sectoral development.

Human Development Index

218. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact while the number of Indians living in poverty has gone down from 35 per cent to 26 per cent during the last decade, India still ranks 127 out of 177 countries for the second year in a row on the Human Development Index of the United Nations;

(b) if so, what are the determinant norms and criteria laid down, besides basic health and education, for determining the index reading; and

(c) what is the plan of action, if any, for the ensuing decade, for improving India's position on the UN Human Development Index, and the targets contemplated thereunder?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The number of Indians living in poverty as measured by the official methodology of the Government of India has gone down from 36 per cent 1993-94 to 26.1 per cent in 1999-2000. India ranks 127 out of 177 countries as per the Human Development Reports (HDR) 2004 and 2005 prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

(b) The Human Development Index (HDI) is a summary measure of human development. It measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development:

(i) A long and healthy life, as measured by the expectancy at birth.

(ii) Knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate (with two-thirds weight) and the combined primary, secondary and tertiar gross enrolment ratio (with one-third weight).

(iii) A decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity US$). Before the HDI itself is calculated, an index needs to be created for each of these dimensions. To calculate these dimension indices - the life expectancy, education and GDP indices - minimum and maximum values (goalposts) are chosen for each underlying indictor. Performance in each dimension is expressed as a value between 0 and 1. The HDI is then calculated as simple average of the dimension indices.

(c) The Plan of action of the Government to improve the various criteria used in the Human Development Index has been incorporated in the Tenth Plan document and in the Mid-Term Appraisal of the Tenth Plan which have been placed in the Parliament Library.

Current proverty line

219. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government consider the current poverty line decided by the Planning Commission to be appropriate in the present context;

(b) whether the Planning Commission has formed an Expert Group to revise the poverty line; and

(c) if so, whether the Planning Commission has decided upon a timeframe for the implementation of the recommendations of the Expert Group?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The present concept of poverty line is based on the per capita consumption expenditure needed to attain a minimum amount of calorie intake out of food consumption along with a